

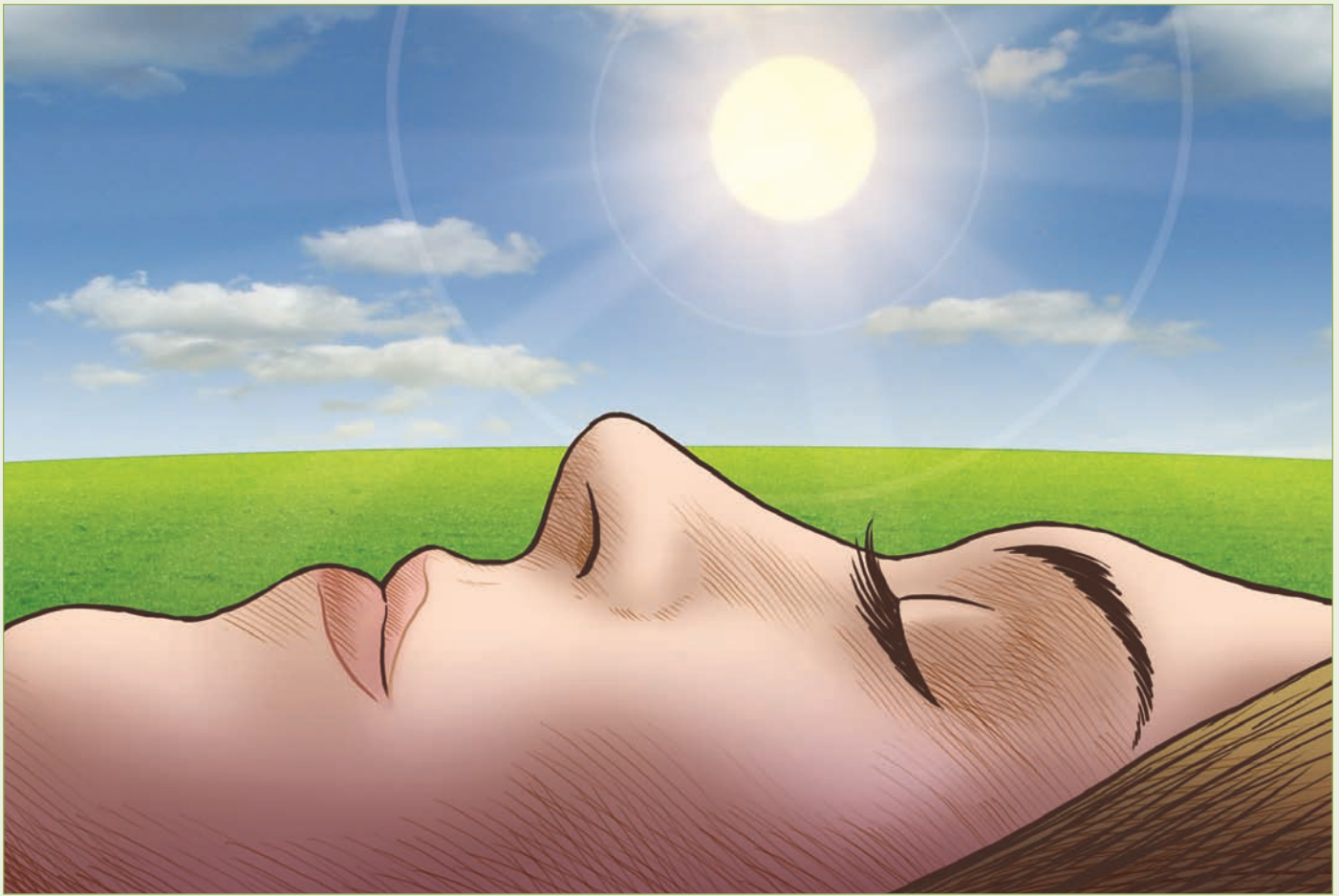


Hypnosis for fertility is becoming more and more popular, with thousands of women in the United States and Canada using a treatment called HypnoFertility. Their success stories are glowing enough to make the hardest skeptics smile. More and more women believe that hypnosis increased their chances of conception leading to term, and some preliminary research seems to support this belief: in a 2006 study of 195 patients undergoing IVF, 28% achieved clinical pregnancy with hypnosis at the time of embryo transfer, compared to only 14% without.¹

Two studies led by Dr. P. Thiering, in 1993 and 2001,^{2,3} explored the effects of anxiety and depression on conception, and the results seem to indicate that the process of conception can indeed be influenced by the mind. The first study found that clinical depression affects pregnancy rates in IVF treatment – women with ongoing clinical depression (i.e. depression that was not simply the result of infertility) were only half as likely to become pregnant. His 2001 study incorporated anxiety as well as depression, and found that women with “trait” anxiety – ongoing anxiety in existence prior to infertility diagnosis and treatment – were also only half as likely to see a successful outcome. In 1999, a similar study confirmed the findings that women with depression symptoms resulting from a failed first IVF showed a 60% viable pregnancy

USING HYPNOSIS TO AID FERTILITY

by ANTHONY SANTEN, CHT.



rate within six months when these depression symptoms were treated. The women whose symptoms were left untreated before a second attempt showed a pregnancy rate of only 24%.⁴

These studies may provide a clue as to why so many women feel hypnosis helped them to conceive. If how we are feeling emotionally affects us physically, treatments like hypnosis for depression and stress could be key.

IVF requires the body to perform the delicate process of conception while the mind is coping with unfamiliar surroundings, privacy-related uneasiness, and invasive procedures. Hypnosis may provide the calming effect that relieves situational stress.

Modern hypnosis techniques are able to bring about internal body changes through what is now known as the Mind-Body Connection – in scientific

terms, the neuroendocrine system. The use of these techniques is not new, in fact, documented history of the ability of the mind – and hence hypnosis – to influence the body goes back as far as the early 1800s. The scientific community remained skeptical until 1977, when Roger Guillemin and Andrew Schally received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their research into this very connection.⁵

It's very difficult to prove at what level the mind and metaphors actually connect to and alter bodily states, but time and time again hypnosis is quoted as a catalyst in manifesting change through thought. Ernest Rossi PhD and Kathryn Rossi PhD, award-winning psychologists and pioneers in research of the mind-body connection, have studied this subject in detail. With an increased understanding of how the mind-body connection works within the brain, they are able to teach hypno-

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tists how to apply techniques to effect change. The changes that are useful in working with fertility concentrate on creating a balance within the body. The desired changes are directly influenced by hypnotic suggestion. To cite a popular example of hypnosis affecting this mind-body connection, stage hypnotists often suggest to a volunteer that the temperature is becoming unbearably cold, causing the subject to show signs such as shivering, or likewise, make the suggestions that cause the volunteer to feel hot; the audience witnesses the subject removing articles of clothing in response.

The client's willing participation is a prerequisite to hypnotic change. All hypnosis is self-hypnosis, to the extent that the hypnotist doesn't – and can't – force the subject to participate in the process. Without the participation of the client's mind and belief system,

mind-body hypnosis is unsuccessful. The client must allow the hypnotist to guide them through a series of progressive techniques that allow the subconscious to become receptive to suggestions provided through metaphoric imagery. Often the client doesn't even "feel hypnotized," as the conscious mind remains active during the process.

The success of Hypnosis for Fertility is not only measured by pregnancy rates. Successful outcomes are the product of many factors, including hypnosis. But the very first objective in hypnosis for fertility is to work with the client to restore a sense of balance in her life. Fertility-specific work focuses on lowering stress levels and "hitting the reset button" – cleaning the physiological slate to be able to move forward in a positive way. This is true for partners also; much of the literature dealing with fertility-related issues focuses on the mother in the relationship, sometimes leaving male partners without

adequate support. A 2003 study found that males who had trouble conceiving and reported distress as a result showed lower sperm quality when re-tested a year later.⁶ Several studies show how stress influences sperm quality, and in some studies timed intercourse is mentioned as a contributing factor in stress related anejaculation (inability to ejaculate).⁷ Male partners will also benefit from creating moments of calm and inner peace during stressful times. As director of HypnoFertility Canada, I find assisting patients to create their own results is very rewarding... no two cases are alike, but it is a privilege to be able to assist couples to create the families they have been waiting for, often for such a long time. Hypnosis for Fertility may hold a key to connecting with your internal peace of mind and helping you regain your own individual balance.

About the author

Anthony Santen is a recognized HypnoBirthing® Fertility Therapist and NGH Certified Master Hypnotist. He has worked closely with naturopathic doctors and fertility clinics, as well as Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners, acupuncturists and homeopathic doctors to achieve pregnancies, either through natural conception or through assisted methods such as IVF or IUI. Anthony Santen is the Director of Goo Fusion Corp. and Ontario Hypnotherapy in Markham, Ontario. He is Certified HypnoBirthing® Fertility Therapist and NGH Certified Master Hypnotist.⁸ His specialty and research focus include Hypnosis for Fertility and Hypnotic Neuroendocrinological Balancing.

For an on-line listing of HypnoBirthing® Certified Fertility Therapists, visit:
USA: www.HypnoFertility.com
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